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Assistance in mine action

United Nations mine action: a strategy for 2001-2005*

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum 1

I. Introduction

1. Since the question of mine action was first taken up by the General Assembly in 1993, the international community has made significant progress towards creating an environment free from the threat of landmines:[1]

(a) Most nations are in de facto compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (anti-personnel mine ban treaty),[2] and the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Convention on certain conventional weapons).[3] This has resulted in a dramatic decline in the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of landmines;

(b) Public and political awareness of the landmine problem is widespread;

(c) Funding levels for mine action continue to be sustained, and even increased;

(d) In a growing number of countries, substantial progress has been made in reducing the impact of landmines through awareness education and the mapping, marking and clearance of mined areas.

2. The international mine action community has also recorded several important achievements in the area of institutional development, including the following:

* This strategy was endorsed on 26 September 2001 by the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Mine Action during a meeting chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

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(a) New standards and tools have been developed, including the International Mine Action Standards, the Information Management System for Mine Action, the Mine Action Investment Database, and the Stockpile Destruction Resource Site;

(b) The Meetings of States Parties to and the Standing Committees of the anti-personnel mine ban treaty, and of the Review Conferences and Preparatory Committees of the Convention on certain conventional weapons have continued to make significant progress;

(c) Mechanisms now exist to support coordination between donors and mine-action agencies; the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining has been established; and organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines continue to undertake new initiatives.

3. With these political and institutional developments in place, and with a growing understanding of the nature and scope of the mine problem taking root, the international mine action community is ready to move ahead from an approach that reacts to problems as they arise, to one in which mine action issues are addressed strategically at the national and global level.

4. The present document lays out a map for this transition, establishing a strategy[4] for United Nations mine action covering the period 2001-2005. It outlines broad goals for mine action in general, and sets specific objectives for the United Nations system, working in partnership with Governments, international and non-governmental organizations, affected communities and concerned individuals, in response to the global landmine problem.

II. Vision

> We envision a world free of the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance, where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to development, and where mine survivors are fully integrated into their societies.

III. Key principles

5. The principles outlined below reflect the agreed core values and policies upon which United Nations mine action is based:[5]

Nature of mine action

6. Mine action is, above all, about the interaction of people and communities with a mine-infested environment. The purpose of mine action is to recreate a safe environment conducive to normal life and development. Accordingly, mine action refers to all those activities geared towards addressing the problems faced by populations as a result of landmine or unexploded ordnance contamination. It encompasses five complementary core components: (a) mine awareness and risk reduction education; (b) mine clearance, including survey, mapping, and marking; (c) victim assistance; (d) destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel landmines; and (e) advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines and support a total ban on anti-

personnel landmines (A/53/496, annex II, para. 7). In countries where landmines present a threat to local populations or an obstacle to socio-economic development, mine clearance is a principal requirement, central to mine action efforts.

Humanitarian imperative

7. The United Nations policy vis-à-vis mine action and effective coordination articulates the strong humanitarian platform from which the United Nations approaches mine action. The policy states that landmines are first and foremost a humanitarian concern and must be addressed from this perspective. They are also an impediment to rehabilitation and sustainable (socio-economic) development. In dealing with the landmine problem, the United Nations will respect the fundamental humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity so that priority is given to those who are most vulnerable. In order to receive assistance, relevant parties should be committed to supporting mine action actively, and to desisting from producing, stockpiling, using, and transferring anti-personnel landmines. Humanitarian mine-action activities focused on reducing immediate threats to the well-being of affected communities and to the activities of humanitarian workers should not be subjected to conditionalities related to the continuing use of landmines (A/53/496, annex II, paras. 8 and 10-12).

Principle of national ownership and integration

8. According to the United Nations policy, "the primary responsibility for taking action against landmines lies with the concerned State" (ibid., para. 23). In countries where the scale of mine contamination is widespread and severe, and where international support is required, the United Nations stands ready to assist in the development of national/local mine-action programmes. In order to be effective, programmes in countries recovering from violent conflicts should be integrated into comprehensive strategies designed to support humanitarian action, peace-building, reconstruction and development.

Principle of cooperation and partnership

9. To ensure the most efficient response to the landmine threat, Governments, international organizations and civil society must cooperate closely with one another. The United Nations is committed to working in partnership with all like-minded organizations that endorse these principles, and to promoting effective coordination between all parties.

IV. Framework

10. The activities outlined in the present strategy document will be implemented within the context of a larger framework of treaties, resolutions and policies, which are described below.

International treaties and resolutions

11. This strategy is designed to be consistent with existing treaties, protocols and resolutions relevant to mine action, including, but not limited to, the anti-personnel mine ban treaty, the Convention on certain conventional weapons and its Protocols, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols of 1977, the Convention on

the Rights of the Child and the standard rules for the disabled.[6] The strategy is intended to assist Member States to fulfil their international obligations and to support the universalization of relevant international instruments.

United Nations mine-action policy

12. This strategy also builds upon the United Nations policy on mine action (A/53/496, annex II), with which it is designed to be consistent. The strategy sets out concrete objectives for the period 2001-2005 for the United Nations system, working collectively under the coordination of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat.

V. Mission Statement

> Over the period 2001-2005, the United Nations will work in partnership with others to reduce the threat posed by landmines and unexploded ordnance, increase the understanding of the global mine problem, assist affected nations, and coordinate international mine-action efforts.

VI. Strategic goals and objectives

13. The strategy is built around six broad goals relevant to all core components of mine action. These goals, which are organized according to key themes, are intended to be complementary, rather than hierarchical. Together they form an integrated strategy. While the strategic goals suggest areas of priority for the international community as a whole, the objectives correspond to the specific contributions that the United Nations system intends to make, working in collaboration with its many partners to support the achievement of each goal. The United Nations intends to achieve all of the stated objectives by 2005, unless otherwise specified. For each objective, the relevant United Nations agencies will establish action plans, consisting of time lines, progress indicators and supporting outputs. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action will identify the agencies within the United Nations system responsible for the related activities (see A/53/496, annex II, para. 44).

Information

Strategic goal One. Information is produced and made available to all to understand and address mine-action problems.

Objective 1.1 Inter-agency assessment missions completed and reports circulated for all affected countries requesting assistance within four months of formal request being received.

Objective 1.2 A web-based mine information network developed by 2002, serving as a central gateway to all mine-related information, including reports provided under article 7 of the anti-personnel mine ban treaty, aggregated data coming from field programmes through the

Information Management System for Mine Action, and information on resources and technology.

Objective 1.3 By mid-2002, data collected and made publicly available on the status of the national stockpiles of all States Parties to the anti-personnel mine ban treaty.

Objective 1.4 The Information Management System for Mine Action, or equivalent compatible system, fully developed to meet the requirements of mine action programmes and deployed in all United Nations-supported programmes by 2003, with appropriate training provided to all users.

Objective 1.5 Institutional roles defined, and information management tools established, to support mine-action technology development and dissemination of guidance to users by 2003.

Emergency response

Strategic goal Two. Rapid response capability is in place to meet mine action requirements in emergency situations.

Objective 2.1 An emergency response plan based on collaborative arrangements among United Nations and other partners in place by the end of 2002, including arrangements for prompt mobilization of human, material and financial resources in support of the plan.

Objective 2.2 Mine-action requirements integrated into existing early warning mechanisms, humanitarian response plans and peacekeeping contingency plans and procedures by the end of 2002.

Objective 2.3 Guidelines developed and widely circulated by the end of 2002 regarding appropriate mine-action language to be included in ceasefire agreements, peace treaties and humanitarian access protocols.

Objective 2.4 Protocols that are compatible with the Information Management System for Mine Action for the rapid gathering in emergency situations of mine-related information developed by the end of 2002, including provision for data on victims.

Objective 2.5 Mine-action services effectively coordinated and implemented in United Nations-mandated operations.

Assistance to national and local authorities

Strategic goal Three. National and local capacities are in place to plan, coordinate and implement mine-action programmes.

Objective 3.1 In United Nations-supported national programmes, mine-action strategies and plans developed and linked with overall national development and reconstruction plans.

Objective 3.2 Transition and exit strategies developed for all United Nations-supported programmes by the end of 2002, or within one year of initiation for programmes established after that date.[7]

Objective 3.3 International Mine Action Standards-compliant landmine impact surveys implemented in 15 of the most mine-affected countries by the end of 2004.

Objective 3.4 Fifteen impact-based national plans completed, reflecting community participation, with nationally defined time lines.

Objective 3.5 Management and operational training curricula targeted at personnel working in mine-action programmes developed by the end of 2002.

Objective 3.6 A United Nations policy developed for supporting the professional retraining and employment of landmine survivors and other disabled people in mine-action organizations by the end of 2002.

Objective 3.7 A plan for United Nations support to mine-action cooperation among mine-affected countries developed and initiated by 2003.

Objective 3.8 Gender perspectives[8] mainstreamed into all United Nations-supported mine-action programmes by 2003.

Objective 3.9 All United Nations-supported victim assistance activities integrated into broader community and public health strategies by 2004.

Quality management

Strategic goal Four. Mine-action operations are implemented in a safe and cost-effective manner.

Objective 4.1 Review, revision and drafting, where required, of additional International Mine Action Standards completed, including those relating to mine detection dogs and mechanical equipment.

Objective 4.2 International standards for mine awareness/risk reduction education integrated into the International Mine Action Standards and disseminated by the end of 2002.

Objective 4.3 Assistance provided to national Governments to enable them to adopt the International Mine Action Standards for all mine-action activities.

Objective 4.4 At least one external evaluation conducted in all United Nations-supported programmes.

Objective 4.5 Mechanism for the collection, dissemination and application of lessons learned and best practices developed for United Nations mine-action programmes by the end of 2002.

Objective 4.6 Model language incorporating revised mine-action standards developed by the end of 2002 for use in contracts between donors, United Nations agencies and departments, and implementing partners.

Objective 4.7 By end of 2002, United Nations technical assistance made available to national mine-action bodies to develop local mine-action legislation based on, or consisting of International Mine Action Standards.

Objective 4.8 Initiatives to increase the availability of safe, appropriate and cost-effective techniques and technologies for mine detection and mine clearance continuously encouraged and supported.

Coordination and resource mobilization

Strategic goal Five. Adequate resources for mine action are mobilized and their use is effectively coordinated.

Objective 5.1 Donor coordination mechanisms in countries receiving significant mine-action assistance supported or initiated by the United Nations.

Objective 5.2 Meetings of the Steering Committee on Mine Action held twice a year, providing an effective mechanism to review operational activities and policy issues at the international level (A/53/496, annex II, para. 45).

Objective 5.3 Global donor coordination mechanisms continuously supported.

Objective 5.4 Requirements for assistance in mine action regularly included in existing humanitarian and developmental resource mobilization mechanisms, such as the consolidated appeal process and round tables.

Objective 5.5 Full participation by donors in the Mine Action Investment Database achieved by 2003.

Objective 5.6 Portfolio of mine-related projects, including United Nations and other projects, that reflect national mine-action priorities, made electronically available and frequently updated, beginning in 2002.

Objective 5.7 A meeting of national programme directors and advisers held annually and effectively utilized as a forum for the exchanging of lessons learned and enhancing of international cooperation at the field level.

Objective 5.8 Initiatives to strengthen mine-action coordination at the regional level, supported where appropriate.

Objective 5.9 International technical material and financial assistance for mine action, in particular for the marking and clearance of minefields in affected countries, systematically promoted and facilitated.

Advocacy

Strategic goal Six. International instruments that address the mine/unexploded ordnance problem are universalized.

Objective 6.1 All States regularly encouraged to ratify, accede to and comply with, existing international instruments on landmines.

Objective 6.2 Efforts to further develop international law as it relates to landmines and explosive remnants of war supported.

Objective 6.3 United Nations public advocacy strategy to support mine action, including the rights of victims, developed by the end of 2002.

Objective 6.4 Increased involvement of senior leadership of the United Nations as advocates for mine action in United Nations, diplomatic, and public forums, and in affected countries and regions.

VII. Conclusion

14. The objectives identified above represent United Nations priorities for mine action for the period 2001-2005. They are ambitious, but they are also attainable. While the United Nations will remain prepared to respond to critical new needs and concerns that arise during the strategy period, the primary focus will be on achieving the strategic objectives in the present document. The impact of United Nations mine action will be significantly enhanced by this commitment to concentrate resources in those areas of intervention where the United Nations is most effective and most needed. Progress in achieving the goals and objectives in this strategy will be reported annually to the General Assembly in the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action. The strategy will be formally reviewed and evaluated in 2003, involving wide consultation with the United Nations partners.

Notes

[1] Throughout the document, the term "landmine" will be used in reference to both landmines and unexploded ordnance.

[2] Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction: 133 Signatories and 120 States parties, as of 26 September 2001.

[3] Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices (as amended on 3 May 1996) to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects: 59 Parties, as of 26 September 2001.

[4] This strategy has been developed in response to an identified need within the United Nations mine-action community for a defined vision for the future of the Organization's response, and measurable outputs in support of this. This need was further highlighted in General Assembly resolution 55/120 of 6 December 2000, in which the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to develop further a comprehensive mine-action strategy.

[5] "Mine action and effective coordination: the United Nations policy", submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, as part of his report on assistance in mine clearance (A/53/496, annex II, dated 14 October 1998). It was subsequently taken note of by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/26 of 17 November 1998.

[6] Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex, of 20 December 1993).

[7] In the context of the present document, the development of an exit strategy refers to the definition of clear objectives to be achieved in order for United Nations support to a national mine-action programme to be either terminated or very significantly reduced.

[1] Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (Agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the 1997 coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV.A).

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Mine action and effective coordination: the United Nations policy

Sectoral policy: information management for mine action*

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum 2

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* This sectoral policy was endorsed on 26 September 2001 by the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Mine Action during a meeting chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

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I. Introduction

1. There is growing awareness within the international community that what has come to be known as the "global landmine crisis" has far-reaching consequences and requires a multifaceted and integrated response. There is also recognition that the United Nations has a key role to play in articulating this response and in providing the necessary support and coordination mechanisms. This role has been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in successive resolutions on assistance in mine action, as well as in the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects[1] and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.[2]

2. The role of the United Nations as a central repository of information for mine action is particularly critical. In its latest resolution on assistance in mine action (resolution 55/120 of 6 December 2001), the General Assembly emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive information management system for mine action, under the overall coordination of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, in order to facilitate the setting of priorities and the coordination of field activities. The General Assembly also urged Member States and regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data, as well as other appropriate resources that could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine action.

3. In addition, both article 11-2 of the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and article 6-6 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction call upon States to provide information to the database on mine clearance established within the United Nations system, especially information concerning various means and technologies of mine clearance, and lists of experts, expert agencies or national points of contact on mine clearance.

4. Building upon recent developments, experiences and lessons learned, the present paper was developed to define the key principles on which United Nations mine-action information management is based and to clarify roles and responsibilities within the United Nations system in this regard. It is intended as a sectoral policy, further elaborating the United Nations mine-action policy document submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (A/53/496, annex II).

II. Objectives

5. Recognizing that effective information management underpins the success of all aspects of United Nations mine-action programming and management, the objectives of this policy are threefold and complementary:

(a) To foster the ability of the United Nations system, mine-affected countries and the wider international community to maximize the use of information for mine action and other humanitarian and development activities;

(b) To support decision-making and prioritization for both global oversight and field-level mine-action activities;

(c) To strengthen the credibility of the United Nations in terms of transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

III. Guiding principles

A. General

6. Information management refers to the technical resources and skills, as well as procedural and organizational mechanisms, necessary to effectively collect and use information in support of organizational and programmatic objectives, including prioritization and decision-making.

7. Mine action information management refers to the management of information in support of all those

activities which are integral to effective mine action,[3] including:

(a) Mine awareness and risk reduction education;

(b) Minefield survey, mapping, marking and clearance;

(c) Victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration;

(d) Stockpile destruction;

(e) Advocacy and treaty implementation;

(f) Other enabling activities, such as resource mobilization, management and reporting, capacity-building, planning and operational management, training and quality management.

8. Information management is neither an end in itself nor a stand-alone activity. The aim of mine-action information management is to support the mine-action community's decision-making, reporting and public information requirements, while recognizing that these requirements may be different at the field level and at the global and headquarters level. Information management should allow the mine-action community more effectively to:

(a) Define and analyse the landmine problem;

(b) Develop and manage appropriate mine-action programmes;

(c) Assess and measure the progress made;

(d) Mobilize, allocate and monitor resources.

9. Effective information management systems require reliable geospatial data (paper maps and digital data). Therefore, the development of mine-action programmes and information management systems should take into account from the outset the availability, quality, extent, format and acquisition costs of the geospatial data required.

B. Information collection and maintenance

10. Data-collection activities need to be closely coordinated in order to avoid duplication of efforts, and should incorporate proper quality control mechanisms. Data collection and quality control should be conducted in accordance with existing international standards.

11. At the field level, national and local mine-action programmes and mine-action coordination centres, where they exist, are responsible for coordinating the collection of all mine-related data. In their normal coordination role, United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators will ensure that these efforts are integrated with other information management efforts designed to meet humanitarian and development needs.

12. In order to enhance the reliability, compatibility, comparability and exchange of mine-action information, data collection and recording formats should be standardized. The Mine Action Service, in collaboration with relevant partners, will establish formal procedures to develop and maintain information collection and recording formats and survey standards. Standards and procedures will, wherever possible, follow those already established by relevant groups, such as the Geographic Information Support Team and the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group.

13. The way information is collected and information management systems are structured should be properly documented. The maintenance of metadata, or information about information, should be an integral part of information management, both in the field and at headquarters.

14. The data contained in information management systems represents a significant investment of resources, far surpassing the cost and value of the basic hardware and software. Priority attention should therefore be given to the development of proper information security procedures and tools to safeguard the integrity of the data holdings.

C. Information analysis

15. Information collection and analysis should address the socio-economic factors and criteria required for improved decision-making, including prioritization, of mine-action activities, and support national humanitarian and socio-economic objectives. In addition, information management will provide a common basis for inputs, processing and outputs for all the components of an integrated mine-action programme.

16. The United Nations will develop a knowledge base of guidelines and best practices for country mine-action programme and information managers on the utilization of survey collected data in support of management decision-making.

17. Effective use of information management tools requires training in the requisite skills. Such skills include advanced problem solving and analysis. The United Nations will identify training needs as part of the set-up of a programme and as a recurring capacity-building requirement.

D. Information dissemination and exchange

18. Local and national authorities are the primary owners of mine-action data and information concerning their country. Such information must therefore be properly handled and attributed when used by the United Nations. While certain information may carry specific sensitivities precluding open access, reasons for restricting access to all or portions of datasets should be properly documented.

19. The United Nations supports transparent information exchange for mine action. In principle, all mine action-related information collected by, shared with or made available to the United Nations will be considered public information and dealt with as such. Requests for treating information confidentially must be raised with the United Nations before any such information is provided to the Organization.

20. Information-sharing procedures and mechanisms should be defined and developed based on the users' needs. The detailed information used at the field level is usually not required at the global level. Therefore, mine-related information coming from the field should normally be aggregated and sent to headquarters at one level below the national level.

21. In order to facilitate general information dissemination, as well as the expansion of a mine-action knowledge base, the United Nations supports the maximum use of Internet-based electronic dissemination of information.

IV. Responsibilities and coordination mechanisms for information management

A. Role and responsibilities of United Nations partners

Mine Action Service

22. The Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is the focal point within the United Nations system for all mine-related activities. In this capacity, it has overall responsibility for coordinating the collection, analysis and dissemination of landmine-related information, and for the development of mine-action information management systems. It has entered into a collaborative agreement with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining to support this responsibility. The other partners within the United Nations family are committed to share all relevant information with the Service. The Mine Action Service is also responsible for the development of appropriate standards for mine-action information and information management systems.

Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)

23. The Department for Disarmament Affairs is the repository of all treaty-related information, in particular, information submitted under article 7 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and under Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

24. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is responsible for sharing all relevant information with the Mine Action Service and other partners regarding the humanitarian implications of landmines. It will work to ensure that appropriate information-sharing arrangements are in place and the integration of mine action into overall humanitarian relief planning.

United Nations Children's Fund

25. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), working in collaboration with the Mine Action Service, is the lead United Nations agency for mine-awareness education. In this capacity, it will support the development of policies and standards for mine-action information and information systems insofar as they relate to mine-awareness education requirements.

United Nations Development Programme

26. Recognizing that the Government of an affected country should assume overall responsibility for a national mine-action programme, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will, when required, and in consultation with relevant partners, assist Governments in creating sustainable national capacities for information management, as an integral part of an overall mine-action programme.

World Health Organization

27. Within the framework of its mandate, and in cooperation with the Mine Action Service, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) will support the development of policies and standards for mine-action information and information systems insofar as they relate to victim assistance. WHO will ensure that information collection and management activities that concern victims are designed and executed with the principle of non-discrimination in mind, so that all victims of trauma are equally served by the development of victim information systems.

World Food Programme

28. As the food aid arm of the United Nations, the World Food Programme (WFP) uses its food to meet emergency needs, support economic and social development and provide the logistics support necessary to deliver food. Consistent with its mandate, and in support of the development of rapid mine-action responses in emergency situations, WFP will, in coordination with the Mine Action Service and other partners, contribute to the early collection, analysis and dissemination of mine-related information. The Programme will help to determine emergency and humanitarian mine-clearance needs as they relate to the transport, storage and distribution of food.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

29. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for ensuring that the needs of refugees and other populations of concern to UNHCR are met. Building on its internal management mechanism for emergency preparedness and response in particular, UNHCR will, in coordination with the Mine Action Service and other partners, contribute to the collection and analysis of appropriate information to support the development of mine-action responses when and where required.

United Nations Office for Project Services

30. The United Nations Office for Project Services is a principal service provider within the United Nations system for integrated mine-action and capacity-building programmes. Implementing mine-action programmes as appropriate in collaboration with concerned partners (the Mine Action Service, UNDP and others), it will ensure that due consideration is given to the provision of adequate, timely and appropriate support to all mine-action information management efforts to include equipment, hardware, software, staff/counterpart training and management training.

Other United Nations agencies and departments

31. The contributions of other United Nations agencies and departments, in particular, those which are part of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, are essential for effective mine-action information management. The needs of these agencies and departments will be fully incorporated into the planning of mine-action information initiatives. They will provide full information in support of these initiatives.

B. Contributions of like-minded partners

32. The United Nations welcomes and acknowledges all contributions to mine-action information management made by like-minded partners from Governments, the private sector, research institutions and civil society. A guiding principle is to avoid duplication and maximize mutual benefits from the use of, inter alia, existing databases and software solutions.

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

33. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining is a principal executing partner of the Mine Action Service. In order to meet some of the information requirements of the United Nations, it has agreed with the Service to develop an Information Management System for Mine Action. Under the arrangement, the Mine Action Service is responsible for providing guidance to the Centre for the definition of the overall policy, scope, content, functionality and deployment requirements of the System. The Centre is responsible for development, implementation and training in the field, technical support and project management.

International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations

34. The International Committee of the Red Cross and humanitarian non-governmental organizations are important contributors to mine action. They are an invaluable source of information on landmine-related issues and contribute actively to the development of information management systems for mine action.

C. Coordination mechanisms

35. A Mine Action Information Working Group, established and chaired by the Mine Action Service under the auspices of the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, supports the overall coordination of United Nations mine-action information issues and activities. It reviews, validates and prioritizes information and information system needs, and provides guidance and support to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining in this regard.

V. Conclusion

36. The present document aims to provide the overall policy framework within which the information required for mine-action activities can be managed most effectively and in a coordinated manner. It will be complemented by more detailed technical guidelines and standards to support the development of data-collection procedures and information management systems.

Notes

[1] "Amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices", adopted in Geneva on 3 May 1996.

[2] The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was opened for signature in Ottawa on December 3, 1997.

[3] Therefore, it does not simply refer to the Information Management System for Mine Action, which the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining is developing for the United Nations in order to meet some of its mine-action information requirements.

Annex

Glossary of commonly used terms

Geographic information system (GIS). GIS is a powerful software technology that allows an unlimited amount of information to be linked to a geographic location. Coupled with a digital map, GIS allows a user to graphically view multiple layers of data based on their geographic distribution and association. GIS incorporates powerful tools to analyse the relationships among various layers of information.

Georeferencing. Georeferencing refers to a process whereby geographic coordinates or other indirect referencing codes are added to tabular data in order to allow simple comparison, compilation and analysis of disparate datasets based on common locations.

Mine Action. Mine action refers to all those activities that aim to address the problems faced by civilians as a result of landmine contamination. United Nations mine action encompasses five complementary core components: (a) Mine-awareness and risk-reduction education; (b) minefield survey, mapping, marking, and clearance; (c) victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration; (d) advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines and support a total ban on anti-personnel landmines; and (e) stockpile destruction. In support of these core components, other activities will be key to the success of mine action and mine-action programmes, such as: resource mobilization; national and local capacity-building and requisite institutional support; information management; training of personnel; and quality management.

Raster data. Raster data use an imaginary grid of cells to represent the landscape. Point features are stored as individual column and row entries in a grid; lines are identified as a set of connected cells; and areas are distinguished as all of the cells comprising a feature.

Relational Database Management System (RDMS). As opposed to a single table with numerous fields for each record entered, a RDMS uses identification codes to link multiple tables of data. The codes used establish the relationship between data tables. RDMS is very effective in managing large amounts of data and permitting detailed queries to determine the relationship among data compiled against different records.

Vector data. Vector data use sets of X,Y coordinates to locate three basic types of landscape features: point, lines and areas. Points (towns, incident locations, etc.) are represented by a single pair of X,Y coordinates. Lines (roads, rivers, etc.) are represented by a series of X,Y coordinate points connected in order. Areas or polygons (lakes, administrative boundaries, urbanized areas, etc.) are represented by a set of X,Y coordinates closing on itself and implying its interior.